

**Remarks at the Swearing-In
Ceremony for Paul H. O'Neill as
Secretary of the Treasury**
January 30, 2001

The President. Well, I'm pleased to welcome Nancy O'Neill and the O'Neill family here. Thank you all for coming. It's an honor for both the Vice President and I to say some words about the Secretary of Treasury. With Paul over at the Treasury, he is literally a next door neighbor. And I'm going to see a lot of him right here in this office. He'll be a valued adviser and a steady hand.

Secretary O'Neill has served in this office before, at the Office of Management and Budget. He understands the workings and responsibilities of the executive branch. More than that, he understands the private sector, where he and others like him have been driving our country's economic boom.

In a distinguished career, Paul has earned a reputation as a straight shooter and an innovator. And I'm proud to welcome him as the chief financial officer of this Nation. Paul and I share a great goal: to make sure that all Americans can find high paying, high quality jobs. And we share a vision of how to get there. Our prosperity depends on free trade, less regulation, and America's strong place in our global economy. More than ever, American jobs depend on America's standing in the world.

I value Paul's vast experience in the world economy. I value his background in employing American workers, and I value his steadiness, his conviction, and his authority. We also share a belief that broad, responsible tax cuts are an important step we can take to regain the momentum of our economy. When we reduce the income tax burden, we must do so for everybody who pays taxes.

When we have a Government surplus, we must prioritize and spend responsibly and return some of that surplus to the people who worked for it. Because our Government has a surplus does not mean that every American family has a surplus. In fact, many families are feeling squeezed by high energy prices and credit card debt. We need to give them their own money back, to help families manage their own account, to pay down their own personal debts.

Our tax cut will give the biggest percentage reductions to people who struggle to get into the middle class and American families who struggle to stay there.

I believe in leaving more dollars with the people who earned them, and so does Secretary O'Neill. And I'm proud that those dollars will soon bear the signature of Secretary Paul O'Neill.

Congratulations, Mr. Secretary.

[*At this point, Treasury Secretary O'Neill made brief remarks.*]

The President. Mr. Secretary, thank you.

Why don't we have a family picture, too, if you'd like one. Come on up.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:06 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Nancy O'Neill, wife of Secretary O'Neill. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary O'Neill.

Remarks at the Fishing School

January 30, 2001

Thank you, Tom, very much for having us. And it's such an honor to have John DiIulio on my staff. For those of you who don't know John, he's a pioneer in working with Republicans and Democrats and people who really care about political parties to revitalize neighborhoods and places where hope may have been lost, by rallying faith-based organizations. And so, John, I'm so honored that you've sacrificed for the country.

It's good to see Steve Goldsmith here, who is a partner as well.

A little over a week ago, a few miles from here, I was honored to be inaugurated your President. I'm here today to repeat the promise I made on the steps of the Capitol: I will work to build a single nation of justice and opportunity. I'm going to need some help to do that. And so I'm so honored four Members of the United States Congress are here: Senator Joe Lieberman from the great State of Connecticut; Senator Rick Santorum from Pennsylvania; Congressman Mark Souder of Indiana; Congressman Tony Hall of Ohio.

I'm also pleased that two members of my Cabinet came: one, Mel Martinez, my Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; and finally, Rod Paige, a fellow Texan who is now the Secretary of Education.

The Fishing School obviously attracts people who seek excellence, and all of us up here, regardless of our political party, love to herald excellence. And we love to stand next to people who have got vision and good intentions and a good heart. And that's Tom Lewis.

This little haven is a refuge from violence and addiction and abuse. Children find learning and care, but most important, they find something that we can never pass legislation to achieve, and that's love. They find love. They find an adult saying: Somebody cares about you; somebody loves you; somebody wants to help you. Tom knows what we all know, that through loving children, you find deep fulfillment in your own heart. You can just see it on his face, and you can hear it in his voice.

As a candidate for President, I had the privilege of visiting a lot of churches and synagogues and charitable groups all across the country, groups that offer food and shelter, hope and dignity. I've seen how effective and committed these groups are at saving and changing lives. As President, I am resolved to put Government on your side, Tom, on the side of the committed and the caring and the compassionate.

There are so many people in need. The good news about America is, there are so many willing to serve. It's the great strength of our Nation. There's no limit to the talent and energy and compassion of this great land. But sometimes the need is too great, and the resources are too limited, and all of us, as private citizens and public officials, should help where we can.

Today I'm sending to Congress a set of ideas and proposals that mark a hopeful new direction for our Government. We will encourage community and faith-based programs without changing their mission. We will eliminate barriers to charitable works wherever they exist, and we will encourage charitable giving wherever we can.

I'm open to any good ideas that will come from the Congress. And I can assure you,

these four good Members of Congress will have some good ideas. *[Laughter]* And they're probably not going to be afraid to tell me either. *[Laughter]* But here are some of my proposals.

I want to fully open up the Federal after-school program, called 21st century learning centers, to all after-school programs, including faith-based groups. I propose to create a compassionate capital fund which will provide start-up funds for promising new programs serving people in need. We'll make sure that funding is available to faith-based programs on an equal basis, with nonreligious alternatives.

Government, of course, cannot fund and will not fund religious activities, but when people of faith provide social services, we will not discriminate against them. I propose to encourage mentoring programs for children of prisoners, as well as programs that, when possible, help to mend broken families.

The change we seek won't come all at once by any act of Congress or any Executive order signed by the President. Real change happens street by street, heart by heart, one soul, one conscience at a time. It happens in places like this one, the Fishing School. Yet, I hope that good policies can expand and multiply these efforts, uplifting lives all across America.

You know, those of us in public life oftentimes are honored to be able to see the best of America, to be able to find true strength, the true heart of the country. I believe the true heart of the country can be defined here at the Fishing School, a place, an idea started because somebody said, "What can I do? How can I hear the universal call to love a neighbor just like I'd like to be loved myself?" In this case, a person I call a social entrepreneur, and this is a country of social entrepreneurs.

And our job, regardless of our political party, is to recognize the strength of the country, to nourish it and feed it within the Constitution, within the bounds of the Constitution, and to herald success when we find it. And today all of us are honored to be here to herald success because we have found it right here.

God bless Tom. God bless your program.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:35 p.m. in the multi-purpose room. In his remarks, he referred to Tom Lewis, founder, the Fishing School; John J. DiIulio, Jr., who will head the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives; and Stephen Goldsmith, who will serve on the board of the Corporation for National Service.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Bipartisan Congressional Leaders *January 31, 2001*

Legislative Agenda/Pan Am 103 Trial Verdict

Thank you all for coming. This is part of our effort to get to know each other. And if Thomas and Grassley keep coming up here, we're going to get to know them too good, aren't we? [*Laughter*]

I appreciate the Members of the Congress for being here this morning. Thank you all for coming. We're going to have a good, wide-ranging discussion, hopefully focused on tax relief. I'm pleased to see the CBO members. I think it helps further the case that there is enough money to pay down debt, to meet priorities, and to give some of the money back to the people who pay the bills. That's the taxpayers.

I also appreciate so very much the Scottish court has made a decision and convicted a member of the Libyan intelligence service for the 1988 bombing of Pan Am 103. I appreciate the work of the United States Government team which contributed to this guilty verdict.

Nothing can change the suffering and loss of this terrible act, but I hope the families do find some solace that a guilty verdict was rendered. I want to assure the families and victims the United States Government will continue to pressure Libya to accept responsibility for this act and to compensate the families.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:25 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Representative William M. Thomas, chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means; and Senator Charles Grassley, chairman, Senate Committee on Finance. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in a Meeting With Catholic Charities

January 31, 2001

Listen, thank you all for coming. It has been my honor and that of members of my staff and of my Cabinet to have received leaders from the Catholic Church. During my travels around the country, I have been most impressed by not only the quality of leadership of the men and women who make up the great strength of the Catholic hierarchy but also the unwavering commitment to the poor and to the disadvantaged and to those who are unable to defend themselves.

America is a loving and compassionate country, and the leaders here reflect that compassion and that love. Here are folks that have heard the call from the Lord to love their neighbor and have fostered and nourished and led programs all intended to help people, to help people help themselves.

There is no way that Government can create love. Love comes from a higher calling. Love is inspirational. But what Government can do is fund and welcome programs whose sole intent is to change lives in a positive way.

For the last couple of days I've talked about my office's commitment to faith-based programs; I've talked about initiatives, particularly mentoring initiatives and after-school programs that will welcome faith-based programs. Today I do want to talk about one other component of making sure the initiative is full, and that is that we must reform the tax code, not in the way that I'm going to be talking to a lot of Members of Congress about but in an additional way. And that is to allow non-itemizers to deduct charitable giving off their income.

This is a reform of the tax code that will encourage giving from people who have received no incentive to do so. There is an independent study out today that will show that giving in America will increase significantly when Congress passes this reform and I have the opportunity to sign it.

Our mission in the White House is to say, we welcome you; we welcome your love; we welcome your finances; we welcome your compassion. And to those heroes who live in the neighborhoods all around America who are literally transforming our country in